

The Archaeological Conservancy in Indiana

The Archaeological Conservancy is a national, nonprofit organization whose purpose is the permanent protection of the most significant archaeological sites in the nation. Since our founding in 1980, we have permanently preserved over 405 archaeological sites in over 40 states, including three in Indiana. Generally we do this by acquiring title to the land containing the site and creating a perpetual archaeological preserve. We acquire sites by donation, by bargain-sale-to-charity, and by purchase at fair market price. We do this in order to insure that archaeological sites will be available to future generations for research, education and as landmarks of our national heritage.

Archaeological sites on private land are sometimes at risk for impact by residential and commercial development, mechanized agriculture, and looting. Indiana is unusually progressive in having a law, The Indiana Historic Preservation Act (IC 14-21-1), which provides a level of protection to archaeological resources on private land, but loss of archaeological resources remains a constant threat. The Archaeological Conservancy takes a complementary approach to archaeological site preservation by seeking to become the owner of significant archaeological sites. As Mark Michel, the CEO of The Archaeological Conservancy likes to say “We do it the American way, we buy them.”

Purchasing land is, of course, an expensive proposition. As a private nonprofit, The Archaeological Conservancy receives no governmental money and relies entirely on private support. Our principal source of funds comes from our membership. The Archaeological Conservancy has about 20,000 members nationwide, whose annual dues support the operations of the organization. The Archaeological Conservancy also solicits grants from corporations and charitable foundations, especially to fund individual acquisition projects. To keep our membership abreast of our activities, and to generally raise awareness of the nation’s rich archaeological heritage, TAC publishes *American Archaeology*, the only magazine devoted to North American archaeology written for the general public.

The Archaeological Conservancy has created three archaeological preserves in Indiana. The first, the Luthra Archaeological Preserve, was donated to the Conservancy by Eclipse Development Corporation. It serves as green space in a residential subdivision in Johnson County and preserves a portion of a late prehistoric Oliver Phase village.

Our second preserve, The Daughtery-Monroe site in Sullivan County, was purchased at fair market price after negotiations with the landowners, who wished to see the important cultural resources on their property permanently protected. The site dates circa AD 200 – AD 600 and is a village of approximately 14 acres.

Our third preserve, The Goodall site, is the most famous of TAC’s Indiana preserves. Known since the 19th century, this complex of 22 conical burial mounds dating from AD 1 -200, was of seminal importance in early 20th century formulations of the culture history in Indiana and Michigan. Although pre-scientific excavation, looting, and plowing have largely erased all above-ground traces of the mounds from the landscape,

modern geophysical surveys using magnetometer and soil-resistivity techniques continue to produce new information about the site. The site was purchased at fair market value from an owner who otherwise planned to subdivide the property as a residential development.

As Indiana's population grows, its economy expands, and its urbanization increases, its archaeological sites will come under greater than ever threats of destruction. The Archaeological Conservancy is actively seeking additional archaeological sites to acquire as permanent research preserves. Any archaeological site on private land that an archaeologist might want to investigate in the future is a potential candidate for acquisition as a permanent research preserve. Persons with information about archaeological sites on private land or who wish further information about the organization can visit our website www.americanarchaeology.com or write Paul Gardner, Midwest Regional Director, The Archaeological Conservancy, 3620 N. High St, Suite 307, Columbus, OH 43214.